

May 1, 1919

Japanese Diplomacy and Force in Korea

Published by
KOREAN NATIONAL ASSOCIATION
May 1, 1919

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By Arthur MacLennan.

KOREA has appealed to the world for freedom. Oppressed for fourteen years by Japan's military and unjust rule, the twenty million people of the once Hermit Kingdom, one of the most unique and ancient races in the world, with a wonderful history that has scarcely any parallel, is seeking deliverance from a yoke which has become intollerable.

Korea's appeal is opportune and not only merits but demands the earnest consideration of the world powers. The principles which underlie the right of self-determination must be applied universally if they are to be applied at all. The doctrines which President Wilson has been preaching and for which America has so solidly stood throughout the war, and which are now being promulgated by the League of Nations, are mere words if they can not be applied concretely. No nation in the world has a better claim to independence than Korea. It is therefore timely to consider the plight of this people.

Treaties have not protected her—the national Korean archives must hold an interesting collection of these pacts between nations, for which, in the case of Korea, the phrase, "scraps of paper" most aptly applies.

Coming down to the present through fourteen years of Japanese domination, sometimes termed "benevolent assimilation," Koreans find this to be the present tragic condition of their national existence:

Their richest lands rapidly passing under private and Japanese Government ownership.

The Korean language abolished from the public schools, with the substitution of Japanese.

Korean scholars not permitted the higher education.

The history of a proud Korea excluded from the schools to make way for Japanese culture.

All Koreans forced to salute the Japanese flag and to worship the Japanese Emperor's tablet.

Constant and bitter persecution of Christianity in all its activities—both in its distinctively religious activities and in its social and educational work—while official sanction is given Buddhist and Shinto propagandists.

Japanese in control of all business and industry.

Constant inhumane treatment of any Korean who exhibits outwardly his endeavor to remain Korean.

Unable longer to endure these conditions, the Koreans, in a wonderful movement which was spontaneous and nation-wide, without intrigue or force of arms, has not only declared its independence and set up a provisional government, but has convinced the world that the Korean people desire freedom from the Japanese yoke and that they are no longer able to endure Japanese domination.

This passive resistance movement of the Koreans is a striking illustration of the spirit of this unique people. It comes of an old national custom of other centuries, when the populace, protesting against some royal decree, assembled in front of the Emperor's palace and sat in silence for days and nights until their appeal was answered.

Even Japanese militarism and brutality may find it hard to beat down this movement, which is the expression of the undying spirit of a race with an intense national consciousness.

The events leading from an established protectorate over Korea to her annexation as a vassal state are of historical record, yet a review of them tells a tragic story of the ruthless and cruel triumph of a stronger nation over a weaker—this is the tragedy of Korea.

With the Russo-Japanese war came an official communication to all the powers from the

Japanese Government, setting forth in the most solemn and formal manner the Japanese intentions to "definitely guarantee the independence and territorial integrity of the Korean Empire."

A treaty was made in August, 1904, which strengthened Japan's hold upon the country under the guise of improvements in administration. Japanese money was to be legal tender in Korea, the Korean army of 20,000 was reduced to 1,000; all garrisons were abolished, and a Japanese official exercised the right of eminent domain.

Japanese Treaty-Making.

THE treaty between Japan and Korea, signed November 17, 1905, speaks for itself as a document which gave notice to the world that the sovereignty of Korea had passed and that the country had become a Japanese state. The manner of making the treaty, however, furnishes the indisputable evidence of the imperialistic intentions of Japan toward Korea and the reasons for her established protectorate.

Early in November of 1907, Marquis Ito arrived in Seoul as a special envoy from the Emperor of Japan, presenting a series of demands, drawn in treaty form. By the demands Korea was to surrender her independence as a nation, and was to give control of her internal administration to the Japanese.

The Emperor and his cabinet ministers were aghast, but they remained firm in their refusals to agree to the demands. After hours of persuasive argument on the part of the Japanese envoy that the treaty should be immediately signed to assure the peace of the East, the Emperor spoke:

"Assent to your proposal would mean the ruin of my country, and I will therefore sooner die than agree to them."

The ministers also held out until the Japanese suggested an immediate cabinet meeting at the palace in the presence of the Emperor. This was on the afternoon of November 17, 1905.

F. A. McKenzie, the British journalist and authority on Eastern political subjects, and who was in Korea at this time, gives the following

chronicle of the ill-fated cabinet meeting of that November afternoon:

"All this time the Japanese Army had been making a great display of military force around the palace. All the Japanese troops in the district had been for days parading the streets and open places fronting the Imperial residence. The field guns were out, and the men were fully armed. They marched, counter-marched, stormed, made feint attacks, occupied the gates, put their guns in position, and did everything, short of actual violence, that they could to demonstrate to the Koreans that they were able to enforce their demands.

"To the cabinet ministers themselves, and to the Emperor, all this display had a sinister and terrible meaning. They could not forget the night in 1895, when Japanese soldiers had paraded around another palace, and when their picked bullies had forced their way inside and murdered the Queen. Japan had done this before; why should she not do it again? Not one of those resisting the will of Dai Nippon but saw the sword in front of his eyes, and heard in imagination a hundred times during the day the rattle of Japanese bullets.

"That evening, Japanese soldiers, with fixed bayonets, entered the courtyard of the palace and stood near the apartment of the Emperor. Marquis Ito now arrived, accompanied by General Hasegawa, commander of the Japanese Army in Korea, and a fresh attack was started on the cabinet ministers.

"The Marquis demanded an audience of the Emperor. The Emperor refused to grant it, saying that his throat was very bad, and he was in great pain. The Marquis then made his way into the Emperor's presence and personally requested an audience. The Emperor still refused. 'Please go away and discuss the matter with the cabinet ministers,' he said.

"Thereupon Marquis Ito went outside to the ministers. 'Your Emperor has commanded you to confer with me and settle this matter,' he declared.

"A fresh conference was opened. The presence of the soldiers, the gleaming of the bayonets outside, the harsh words of command that could be heard through the windows of the palace buildings, were not without their effect.

Diplomats Remain Silent.

"**T**HE ministers had fought for days and they had fought alone. No single foreign representative had offered them help or counsel. They saw submission or destruction before them. * * * Signs of yielding began to appear.

"The acting prime minister, Han Kew Sul, jumped to his feet and said he would go and tell the Emperor of the talk of traitors. Han Kew Sul was allowed to leave the room and then was gripped by the Japanese Secretary of the Legation, thrown into a side room and threatened with death. Even Marquis Ito went out to him to persuade him. 'Would you not yield,' the Marquis said, 'if your Emperor commanded you?' 'No,' said Han Kew Sul, 'not even then!'

"This was enough. The Marquis at once went to the Emperor. 'Han Kew Sul is a traitor,' he said. 'He defies you, and declares that he will not obey your commands.'

"Meanwhile the remaining cabinet ministers waited in the cabinet chamber. Where was their leader, the man who had urged them all to resist to the death? Minute after minute passed, and still he did not return. Then a whisper went around that the Japanese had killed him. The harsh voices of the Japanese grew still more strident. Courtesy and restraint were thrown off. 'Agree with us and be rich; or oppose us and perish.'

"Pak Che Sun, one of the Korean statesmen, was the last to yield. But even he finally gave way.

"In the early hours of the morning commands were issued that the seal of State should be brought from the Foreign Minister's apartment, and a treaty should be signed. Here another difficulty arose. The

custodian of the seal had received orders in advance that, even if his master commanded, the seal was not to be surrendered for any such purpose. When telephonic orders were sent to him he refused to bring the seal along, and special messengers had to be dispatched to take it from him by force.

"The Emperor himself asserts to this day that he did not consent."

A native newspaper of Seoul, the "Whang Sung Shinmun," printed a true account of what had taken place. The paper was immediately suppressed and its editor thrown into prison, but in its last issue it voiced the wail of Korea, when the signing of the treaty became known, with this closing paragraph:

"Is it worth while for any of us to live any longer? Our people have become the slaves of others, and the spirit of a nation which has stood for 4,000 years, since the days of Tan Kun and Ke-ja, has perished in a single night. Alas! fellow-countrymen. Alas!"

Treaty a Finished Document.

Here is the treaty:

THE Japanese and Korean Governments, being desirous of strengthening the identity of interests which unite the two empires, have, with the same end in view, agreed upon the following articles, which will remain binding until the power and prosperity of Korean are recognized as having been fully established:

I. The Japanese Government, through the Foreign Office at Tokyo, will henceforward take control and direct the foreign relations and affairs of Korea, and Japanese diplomatic representatives and Consuls will protect the subjects and interests of Korea abroad.

II. The Japanese Government will take upon itself the duty of carrying out the existing treaties between Korea and foreign countries, and the Korean Government binds itself not to negotiate any treaty or agreement of a diplomatic nature without the intermediary of the Japanese Government.

III. (a) The Japanese Government will appoint under His Majesty the Emperor of Korea a Resident-General as its representative, who will remain in Seoul chiefly to administer diplomatic affairs, with the prerogative of having private audience with His Majesty the Emperor of Korea.

(b) The Japanese Government is entitled to appoint a Resident to every Korean open port and other places where the presence of such Resident is considered necessary. These Residents, under the supervision of the Resident-General, will administer all the duties hitherto appertaining to Japanese Consulates in Korea and all other affairs necessary for the satisfactory fulfillment of the provisions of this treaty.

IV. All the existing treaties and agreements between Japan and Korea, within limits not prejudicial to the provisions of this treaty, will remain in force.

V. The Japanese Government guarantees to maintain the security and respect the dignity of the Korean Imperial House.

Treaty Completes Iron Rule.

ANOTHER treaty was necessary for the complete subjugation of the country. The Japanese resident officials were exercising a stronger constraint upon the personal life of the Emperor and he was now surrounded by all Japanese guards and attendants and no one was allowed to visit the palace without an order signed by a Japanese official. The Emperor had secretly dispatched envoys to The Hague to appeal to the powers for the protection of the autonomy of Korea. They failed in securing a hearing, for the diplomatic intercourse with nations was a game in which they were without knowledge.

The Emperor, at last weary of combating the ever-increasing rule of the Japanese and seeing little hope of intervention by the powers, abdicated in favor of his son, a mental incompetent. The old Emperor had played into the hands of his oppressors, and in less than a week, with the same show of force which had characterized the treaty of 1905, a new treaty had been signed.

This treaty, signed July 24, 1907, tells its own story. It follows:

The Government of Japan and the Government of Korea, with the object of speedily providing for the power and wealth of Korea and also of promoting the welfare of the Korean people, have agreed on the following articles:

I. The Government of Korea shall follow the guidance of the Resident-General in affecting administrative reforms.

II. All the laws to be enacted and all important administrative measures to be undertaken by the Korean Government shall previously receive the consent and approval of the Resident-General.

III. Distinction shall be observed between the administration of justice by the Government of Korea and the business of ordinary administration.

IV. The appointment and dismissal of high officials of Korea shall be at the pleasure of the Resident-General.

V. The Government of Korea shall appoint to the Government offices of Korea any Japanese the Resident-General may recommend.

VI. The Government of Korea shall engage no foreigner without the consent of the Resident-General.

RESIDENT-GENERAL ITO.
PRIME MINISTER YI.

From this last treaty to the complete subjugation of Korea was but a step, easily bridged by the Japanese. A complete control of business and commerce, the absolute administration of government, without a Korean voice in political, religious or educational affairs, made annexation of Korea by Japan on August 29, 1910, a matter that failed to draw international attention toward the East.

Here the external history of Korea ended, but the national consciousness of the nation has kept constantly alive the hope of regaining the nation's place among nations. Although having lost international recognition, matters purely affecting Korean nationals had the attention of Korean leaders regardless of Japanese Government action. There are many instances of this Korean activity, one instance in connection with the records of the American

Department of State being of sufficient interest to repeat here.

In the summer of 1913 eleven Korean laborers were employed as fruit pickers to work in Riverside county, California. Alighting from a train at the station of Hemet, they were met by white laborers of the district, who forced them to leave by the first returning train.

The affair came to the attention of the Japanese Consulate-General in San Francisco and he immediately made representations to the State Department in behalf of the Japanese Government, demanding indemnity for the treatment accorded the Koreans.

This was at a time when a discussion of the proposed California land law occupied the attention of statesmen.

A report of the affair also reached the Korean National Association, of which the Rev. David Lee was president. From Dr. Lee's offices in San Francisco he sent the following telegram to Washington:

"To the Honorable William Jennings Bryan,
Secretary of State:

"I have the honor to inform you of the recent expulsion of Korean laborers from Hemet, California, and to address you concerning the Japanese Consulate-General's demand for indemnity. We, the Koreans in America, are not Japanese subjects, for we left Korea before the annexation of Korea by Japan, and we will never submit to her as long as the sun remains in the heavens.

"The intervention by the Japanese Consulate-General in Korean matters is illegal, so I have the honor of requesting you to discontinue the discussion of this case with the Japanese Government representatives. If there is any financial question between the Koreans and the persons who expelled our laborers we will settle it without Japanese interference.

"Yours most respectfully,
"(Signed) DAVID LEE,

"President, Korean National Association
of North America, June 30, 1913."

That the American Government took the same view of the status of Korean nationals in this country as did the Korean leaders is evidenced by the following news dispatch sent out from Washington the day following the receipt of Dr. Lee's telegram:

"WASHINGTON, July 1.—Investigation by agents of the State Department of the recent expulsion of several Korean fruit pickers from Hemet, Calif., was ordered discontinued today and the incident is considered closed.

"Secretary Bryan, who had ordered the inquiry on his own initiative, particularly on account of the pending negotiations between the United States and Japan over the California alien land legislation, received a telegram from David Lee, president of the Korean National Association, informing him that the Koreans involved were not Japanese subjects because they had left their native land before it was annexed by Japan."

This fact alone is proof that the Koreans never have submitted to Japanese sovereignty.

Educational Control First.

THE Japanese official mind knew Korean thought on culture and scholarly achievement, hence the educational system of the country first received official attention. The sacred right of freedom of thought and education was denied the Korean even in the early days of the Japanese occupation, and this, in large measure, has resulted in the present movement.

Quoting an American student:

"Japan has steadily made enemies of the Koreans when she might have made friends. After another year, for instance, they will not be permitted to learn their own language in schools. They must use Japanese exclusively. * * * In countless other ways, following the German system of treating a conquered people, the Japanese have outraged the pride and sentiment of the Koreans when the action would not seem necessary for the maintenance of the Japanese sovereignty."

The only text books now in use in schools are those published in Japan and having official Government sanction. Branches taught by Japanese, or Japanese-speaking Koreans, are utilitarian without chance for scholarly advancement. Japanese history alone is permitted in the schools, all Korean and Western world history being under an official ban, and all holidays and observances are of the Japanese.

The Korean youth, showing promise of scholarly attainments, is not permitted to go abroad for study. In fact, they cannot reach a Western college even by subterfuge, for they are not permitted to leave the country. A few, to satisfy Koreans who have remained known to the nation, are permitted to study in Japan.

Korea wants freedom of education, for it has been her one sure means of maintaining her distinctive nationalism.

Restriction of Religious Freedom.

RESTRICTION of religious freedom was Japan's next step.

Volumes could be written of this phase of the Korean struggle, this fact merely emphasizing the importance of religious control as viewed by Japanese officialdom. Japanese official suppression of religious freedom extends to forbidding pastors of any faith to preach without a license from the Japanese Government, and no religious gathering of more than five persons may be held without official Government sanction. This extends even to the missions, in many cases.

Japanese police authorities keep complete copies of church rolls and secretly harass and intimidate young men and women active in church and mission work. Theological students, upon graduation from the mission seminaries, must secure a license from the Japanese Government and often this is denied if the student is thought to be a patriot.

Christianity, especially, comes under this official suppression, for the Japanese fear the democratic and liberty-loving teachings coming from it.

Business Conquest a Triumph of Greed.

SYSTEMATIC and greedy exploitation extends to every phase of Korean life. All matters of business are viewed from a Japanese and not a Korean point of view and the result is that after fourteen years of such exploitation little remains in Korea for the Koreans.

Japanese agents secure concessions on the most generous terms, while an official control of the nation's per capita finances makes competition, so far as Koreans are concerned, a shadowy possibility. Emigration laws, land-holding regulations and administrative measures affecting the vital existence of the nation are made with sole regard for the Japanese. Any thought of Korean participation in business affairs has not found lodgment during the past few years.

The present economic outlook from the Korean point of view is tragic. Industrial serfdom faces the people.

The Koreans are a patient people, but this condition has proved too much for them, and they have risen. On March 1 they announced to the world in a proclamation signed by thirty-three Korean educational and religious leaders that they had determined to work out their own national destiny as an independent nation.

So united is the Korean mind on the independence movement that the public announcements of passive resistance to future Japanese rule were attended with spontaneous demonstrations thruout the entire country. The demonstrations have grown and spread until the entire nation is as one for freedom.

The Japanese have met the peaceable gatherings of the Korean demonstrators with force and armed aggression. Korean lives have been sacrificed, and probably many more will be sacrificed before a realization comes to Japan that there can be no assimilation of this people.

The leaders, voicing the sentiment of the Korean people, say an empty land may be won by Japan, but never the people with it. This is the soul of Korea speaking, and it must triumph.

The following editorial from "The Recorder," San Francisco, of April 8, 1919, is a clear and accurate statement of the facts concerning Japan's position in and toward Korea. It is from the pen of the Managing Editor, Mr. Andrew Y. Wood, and puts the question directly to the Western world: Is self determination all inclusive, or is it only for the subject peoples of Europe? Are the principles of liberty and humanity for the peoples of Europe and the Western world alone, or are they equally applicable to the people of Asia, suffering as did Belgium, under the heel of the Hun? This question is one that must be answered if justice is to mean anything as between nations.

From "The Recorder," San Francisco, Tuesday, April 8, 1919.

KOREA'S DEMAND FOR SELF-DETERMINATION.

With the development of the doctrine of self-determination there has come a recrudescence of nationality in Korea, the Hermit Kingdom, the Land of the Morning Calm, that has manifested itself in rioting in Seoul and other large centers, the establishment of revolutionary headquarters in Siberia and in the sending of a delegate to the Peace Conference at Paris with a plea for recognition of the rights of the Korean people to govern themselves without the interference of Japan.

The Occidental world has very little authentic information concerning things Oriental and less concerning affairs in Korea, particularly since Japan exercised the power of the strong and annexed the Hermit Kingdom and made it a part of Greater Nippon. About all that the world has learned of the situation in Korea since that time has come from Japanese sources and in Japanese government reports. American writers, publicists and travelers have paid little attention to Korea except to comment, as did Dr. David Starr Jordan a number of years ago, upon the betterment of material conditions in Korea under Japanese rule. This, however, without defending the means by which Japan seized Korea with the aid of the old corrupt and inefficient Korean government.

Nor have native Koreans lifted up their voices in the forum of the world outside of

their own country, altho there is a small but highly intelligent colony of Koreans in San Francisco devoted to the spread of Korean nationality and the promulgation of propaganda concerning their native country. Most of their work, however, seems to have been among their own people. Now, however, the Korean people, having gained strength with their restored ideals of nationality, are speaking freely in the forums of the world and telling of their aspirations for self-determination and relief from the Japanese yoke.

Korea is but a pawn in Japan's game for position in the Orient. Expediency was the sole excuse made by Japan to the world for seizing and annexing the Korean peninsula. The rights of the Korean people cut no figure in the face of Japan's political ambition; Japan deemed Korea necessary for her "safety" and so she took possession, "with the consent of the Korean government," according to an ironic statement issued by the Japanese foreign office at the time, but without consulting the Korean people.

The historic sequence of events may not be familiar. Korea for years had been under the domination of China; when the Japanese power began to grow and Japanese foreign policy to develop, the natural riches of Korea attracted Japan and the seeming lethargy of the people, ground by unjust and dishonest rulers, pointed to that peninsula as a favorable outlet for Japanese colonization because affording vast stores of coal and iron. Economically the situation was very similar to that of Germany and France, that resulted in the taking of Alsace-Lorraine for their great economic deposits of valuable ores.

Korea was one of the bones of contention in the Chino-Japanese war, in 1894, and it was distrust of the growing Russian influence in Korea that resulted in the Russo-Japanese war in 1904. At that time the Korean government consented to the occupation of the peninsula by Japan for the period of the war, with every assurance on the part of Japan that at the end of the war she would withdraw. On February 3, 1904, a treaty was entered into between Japan and Korea by which Japan guaranteed the safety, independence and territorial integrity of Korea; on August 22, 1904, Japan

took charge of Korean financial and diplomatic affairs; on November 17, 1905, control of all Korean foreign affairs passed to Japan and the Mikado's government embarked upon a policy of gradual absorption. The appearance at The Hague tribunal in 1907 of an unofficial Korean delegation seeking Korea's rights as an independent nation was seized upon by Japan as a violation of its treaties with Korea and made the basis of a successful demand for the abdication of the Emperor of Korea; on July 25, 1907, Korea was reduced to the position of a Japanese province with Marquis Ito as the first resident-general and Japan embarked upon a policy of political, economic and social reforms; on August 27, 1910, Japan formally annexed Korea, declaring that so long as Korea was outside of the Japanese empire it was impossible to effect the desired reforms, so it was "benevolently assimilated," again "with the consent of the Korean government," an institution that was absolutely under the control and domination of Japan. The attitude of the Korean people toward this proceeding was manifested in rioting and mob violence which was put down with a ruthless hand by the Japanese military chiefs.

These actions on the part of Japan were not without protest upon the part of the people of Korea. Strong representations were made to the United States government, which, in 1882, had made a treaty agreeing to protect Korea from aggression, but our government chose to ignore its obligations under the treaty sooner than enter into a controversy with Japan over a matter that was considered within Japan's sphere of influence. The delegation to The Hague tribunal was, thru the influence of Japan, denied a hearing and Japan was left with a free hand to do with Korea as she would.

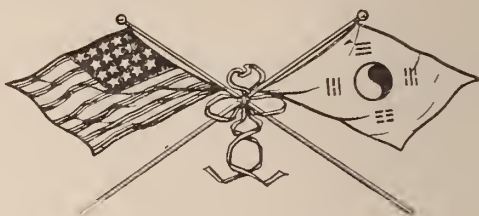
Since that time little information concerning Korea and its internal condition has reached the ears of the outside world save thru the medium of Japanese government reports. American authorities, without defending Japan's action in seizing Korea, for that is indefensible on any basis of equity and ethics, seem to concur that the Japanese administration of affairs has been for the material well-being of the Hermit Kingdom. The currency

has been put upon a stable basis, railroads have been built, schools have been established, altho with Japanese teachers, industry and commerce encouraged, mines opened and many other avenues of economic advantage opened, but always for the benefit of Japanese capital.

In the eyes of the Koreans these things do not compensate for the loss of their nationality nor reconcile them to being a subject people. Western ideas have entered largely into Korea in recent years through the establishment of Christian churches and schools, and the revolutionary party in Korea has been largely recruited from among the Christian converts who are the brains of the movement.

Japan, with German thoroughness, has used every effort to suppress the aspirations of the Koreans for national independence and in the military activities following the recent rising in Seoul has ruthlessly repressed the people and punished those who were engaged or suspected of taking part in the revolutionary movement. In fact, ever since her occupation of Korea, Japan has sought to Prussianize the country by preventing by law any teaching that might keep alive the idea of Korean nationality. It was a regime of force, an orgy of terrorism, that kept the Korean people within bounds; but the world was not permitted to hear or know of it.

Self-determination is one of the accepted policies of the Peace Conference. It is just as important to the world that democracy should be safe in Korea as it is that, for the protection of the balance of power in Europe, the national aspirations of Poland, Czecho-Slovakia and Jugo-Slavia should be recognized. The Koreans, notwithstanding the assertions of certain eminent Japanese at present in this country, are capable of self-government and are entitled to it unless the Peace Conference is going to put the Far East and its subject nations upon a different basis from those of Eastern Europe. Such a result would be a stultification of all of the principles for which the war was fought and upon which the world expects peace to be established.



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